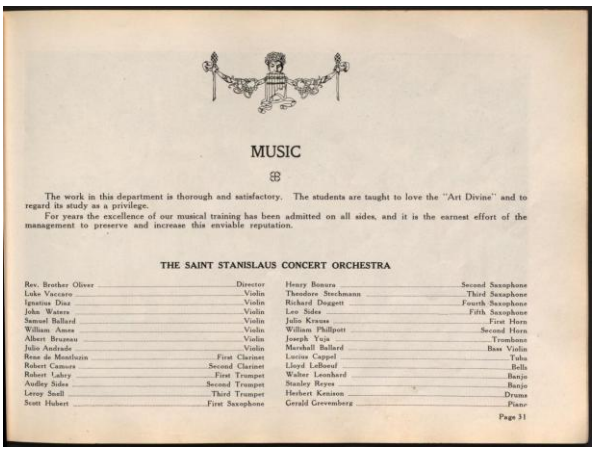
Retro Pages #18: St. Stanislaus Bands and Orchestras, 1875 to 1975

Beginning in 1858, Brother Marie Germain began the music at St. Stanislaus College. For 32 years, he built up the program and formed the first school band in 1875. Then in 1890, he turned the program over to Professor Peter Hemmersbach, the first lay teacher at St. Stanislaus. The next year his brother John Hemmersbach joined him, and together they developed two brass bands and two orchestras. In 1908, their brother Carl Hemmersbach succeeded them. Then in 1916, his younger brother Professor Joseph Hemmersbach replace him, beginning a long-term relationship with the SSC music program. The four Hemmersbach brothers taught their students a true love for music. Their orchestras put on magnificent performances that became a highlight of graduation ceremonies and other festive occasions in Bay St. Louis and nearby towns.

The 1898-99 College Brass Band poses on the campus lawn with Professor John Hemmersbach, far right: Louis Guidry, 1st cornet Arthur Brou, 2nd cornet Eugene Soulier, solo alto George Wilbert, 1st alto James Daniels, 1st alto Maurice Ephraim, 2nd alto Edward Belton, 3rd alto George E. Burch, 4th alto Antoine J. Burch, 1st tenor Benijah Wilbert, 2nd tenor Henry Fanguy, 2nd tenor Walter C Wagner, baritone Maurice Waguespack, bass Bernard Reid, snare drum and T. Weston Brown, drum and cymbals. Three Brothers also participated in the band that year.

From 1923 to 1930, Brother Oliver directed the St. Stanislaus Concert Band, a Brass Band, as well as a Concert Orchestra and a Special Orchestra. He has a knack for getting many students involved, including star athletes. For example, Henry "Zeke" Bonura, who earned 18 varsity letters in sports during his six years at SSC, played saxophone in the Brass Band and was second saxophone in the Concert Orchestra. Pages 31-35 from the 1927 St. Stanislaus catalog show pictures of his bands with names of his students.



MUSIC

The work in this department is thorough and satisfactory. The students are taught to love the "Art Divine" and to regard its study as a privilege.

For years the excellence of our musical training has been admitted on all sides, and it is the earnest effort of the management to preserve and increase this enviable reputation.

THE SAINT STANISLAUS CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Rev. Brother Oliver	Director	Henry Bonura	Second Saxophone
Luke Vaccaro	Violin	Theodore Stechmann	Third Saxophone
Ignatius Diaz	Violin	Richard Doggett	Fourth Saxophone
John Waters	Violin	Leo Sides	Fifth Saxophone
Samuel Ballard	Violin	Julio Krause	First Horn
William Ames	Violin	William Phillpott	Second Horn
Albert Brazeau	Violin	Joseph Yuja	Trombone
Julio Andrade	Violin	Marshall Ballard	Bass Violin
Rene de Montluzin	First Clarinet	Lucius Cappel	Tuba
Robert Camors	Second Clarinet	Lloyd LeBouef	Bells
Robert Lahey	First Trumpet	Walter Leonhard	Banjo
Audley Sides	Second Trumpet	Stanley Reyes	Banjo
Leroy Snell	Third Trumpet	Herbert Kenison	Drums
Scott Hubert	First Saxophone	Gerald Greenwberg	Piano

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SAINT STANISLAUS CONCERT ORCHESTRA

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SAINT STANISLAUS BRASS BAND

Rev. Brother Oliver	Director	Scott Hubert	Saxophone
Luke Vaccaro	Trumpet	Emile Meyer	Saxophone
John Waters	Trumpet	Henry Bonura	Saxophone
Audley Sides	Trumpet	Richard Doggett	Saxophone
Robert Lahty	Trumpet	Twyman Sides	Saxophone
LeRoy Snell	Trumpet	Joseph Vaja	Trombone
George Ader	Trumpet	Julio Krauss	Alto
Rene de Montluzin	Clarinet	William Phillpott	Alto
Robert Camora	Clarinet	Marshall Ballard	Base
Ignatius Diaz	Saxophone	Lucius Cappel	Bass
Theodore Stechmann	Third Saxophone	Herbert Kenison	Drums

SAINT STANISLAUS SPECIAL ORCHESTRA

Rev. Brother Oliver	Director	George Seuzeneau	Saxophone
Luke Vaccaro	Violin	Robert Camora	Saxophone
John Krauss	Violin	Twyman Sides	Saxophone
Rene de Montluzin	Violin	Marshall Ballard	Base
Ignatius Diaz	Violin	Lucius Cappel	Tuba
John Waters	First Cornet	Herbert Kenison	Drums
Audley Sides	Second Cornet	Gerald Greenberg	Piano
Scott Hubert	Saxophone		

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SAINT STANISLAUS BRASS BAND

SAINT STANISLAUS ORCHESTRA

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In 1932 when Brother Romuald took over the band, he capitalized on the strong emphasis on athletics to introduce a marching band in 1935 that performed at half-time shows of football games. His marching bands took part in many local parades and wore snappy eye-catching red and white uniforms complete with capes, hats, and ties. In 1936, the SSC Marching Band won superior ratings at its first state competition in Jackson. Even with so much attention on the marching band, Br. Romuald did not neglect the concert band. By 1937, his concert bands began to win top honors in the state which became a commonplace occurrence. The 1956 yearbook noted that since 1937 the SSC band had

"amassed a total of sixteen plaques for first-place ratings and hundreds of medals by individual members."

THE ROCK-A-CHAW

ST. STANISLAUS BAND 1935-36

Front Row—Henry Platter (Drum Major); William Simpson, George Peranich, T. A. Quintini, Lee Grevemberg, Thomas Gordon, Charles Wenar, Joseph di Benedetto, Brother Romauld, Band Master. Second Row—Leo Schindler Otto Buehler, Aaron Domingue, Fred Fayard, James Currie. Third Row—Charles Meyer, Robert Grevemberg, Joseph Kingston, Thomas Mistretta, Jack Seuzeneau. Fourth Row—Stetson Fitzwilson, James Schwall, John Redmann, George Hammer, Emmanuel Perre, Charles Banderet, Vivian Gianelloni, Russell Elliott, Everet Sandoz Fifth Row—Richard Danos, Giles Gianelloni, Edgar Perre, Victor Gonzales.

In recognition of his 25 years of excellent music ministry at SSC, the school inducted Br. Romuald into its Hall of Fame and in 1975 named its band room in his honor. In 2003, Br. Romuald was inducted into the Mississippi State Music Hall of Fame.

Mr. P.J. Paoli led the band from 1960 to 1966. Numbers in the band decreased significantly as photo in the 1962 in *The Rock-A-Chaw* clearly shows.

Representing the College at school activities, in carnival parades, and in civic gatherings, was the small but effective S.S.C. band, under the direction of Mr. P. J. Paoli and Thomas Blackwell, drum major.

In 1966, Mr. Clem Toca took over the band from Mr. P.J. Paoli and began to rebuild its numbers. It was during his tenure that students from Our Lady Academy first participated in the band. Mr. Toca brought new energy as well as expertise to the band. According to the April 5, 1965 issue of The Rock-A-

Chaw, band students sold light bulbs to raise money for new uniforms and to help with expenses to travel to Oklahoma where they took part in their first national competition.

Jules Lagarde left, and Craig Johnson, with his mother Mrs. Marie Johnson right, are shown selling light bulbs to Mrs. J. D. Reunkels. The boys, members of St. Stanislaus band, are selling bulbs for the benefit of the band.

THE ROCK-A-CHAW

SAINT STANISLAUS COLLEGE
BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI

VOL. 34, NO. 2 — APRIL 5, 1966

GM Offers Scholarships

General Motors recently announced the availability of 800 scholarships for the fall of 1966 at more than 200 colleges and universities participating in the GM Scholarship Plan. The awards will be made to entering freshmen and may be renewed through the normal four undergraduate years for those with satisfactory records.

GM Scholarships are awarded by the 133 private and 80 public colleges and universities participating in the GM Scholarship Plan. These institutions are located in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Their scholarship committees review the applicant's high school records, available entrance test scores, participation in extracurricular activities and leadership traits.

Stipends range from $200 to $2000 per year depending on demonstrated need. There is no restriction on course of study or career. Applicants must be U. S. citizens.

Interested students should see their principal, Brother Flavian or Counselor Brother Mere, for a complete listing of the participating colleges then apply directly to the institutions of their choice. No GM application is necessary.

CLEMENT TOCA LEADS BAND ...
OFFICERS ELECTED, SELL BULBS

SSC-SJA Band has been very active during these last few months. The director of the Music Department is Mr. Clement Toca, and he is assisted in the choral department by Sister Augustine, C.S.J., and Brother Eduardo, S.C.

Mr. Toca is a graduate of the Marist Band, and received his Bachelor Degree in Music from Loyola University in N. O. He will finish his Masters Degree in Music in the course of the year. Mr. Toca has taught music at three schools of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart: McGill in Mobile, St. Aloysius in New Orleans, and here at SSC.

Officers of the band were elected by the members themselves and were proposed as follows: President, John Nocatas; Vice President, Ree Elliot; Property Officer, Pat Murphy; Librarian, Craig Johnson, 1st Lieutenant, Melissa Lucia. The Drum Major is Bill Kershaw. The NCO's were appointed by Mr. Toca and they are as follows: Sgt. Arturo Bourgeuaul, Keith Boudreaux, Elizabeth Lucia, Louis Young, Glenn Toca, and Rory MacDowill. The corporals are Julian Rose and Terry Malone.

Now the marching band consists of sixty members. Upon Mr. Toca's arrival, he decided on new uniforms. The former coats and pants were dyed black and new stripes were put on the pants. New cloth cords were added. New hats with red plumes were purchased, and white cross belts.

The band backed-up the football team in the football games and put on five performances at the half-time. Another performance was put on at Bay High Stadium in conjunction with the band from Hancock North Central.

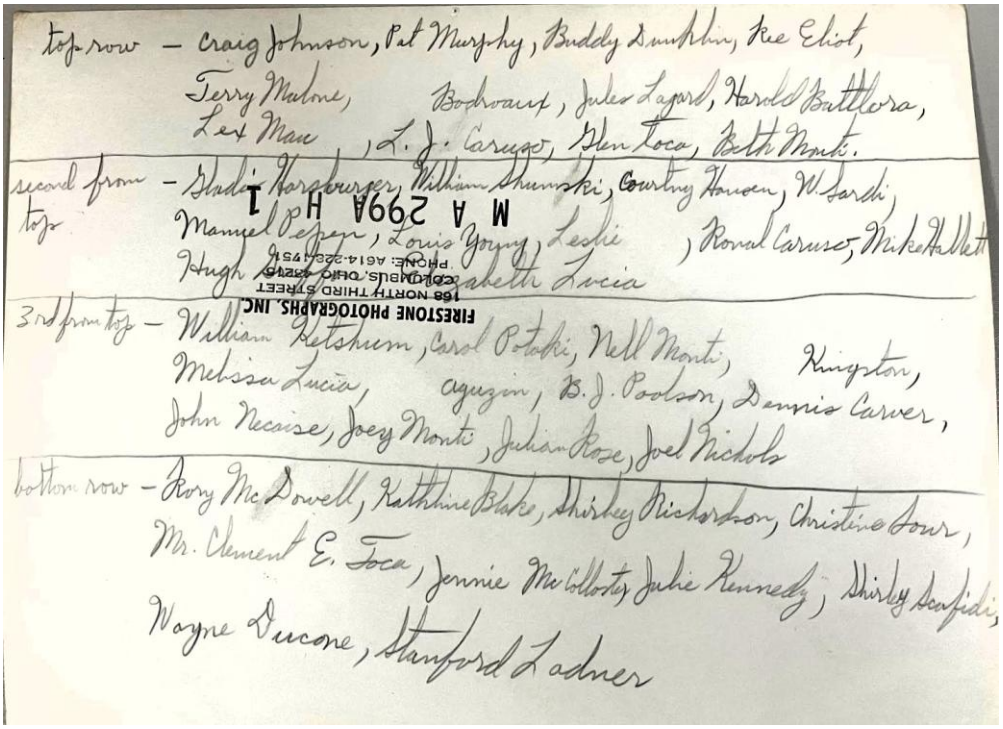
One of the main money-making projects of the band was the selling of light bulbs. This was a door-to-door town-to-town sales project. The parents' Band Boosters Club was a great help in this work.

Looking forward, the band saw a competition skating. It participated in the Mid-City Parade in New Orleans during the Mardi Gras season. This parade is the Greatest Parade in Dixie Conival.

The Glee Club is a very important part of the band. The SSC-SJA Glee Club has competed in the Biloxi Choral Festival held March 11, and received a favorable rating from the judges.

Mr. Clement Toca will accompany the SSC band to Enid, Oklahoma, for a nation-wide competition.

The SSC band 1965 under the direction of Mr. Clem Toca. Names are written on the back.


top row – Craig Johnson, Pat Murphy, Buddy Dunkin, Ree Eliot,
Terry Malone,
Bodnovarp, Jules Lapard, Harold Battlora,
Lee Mace
, L. J. Carriger, Glen Toca, Beth Monte.
record from top –
Gladie Hardenberger, William Shumski, Courtney Hansen, W. Sardi,
Manuel Pepen, Louis Young, Leslie
, Ronal Caruso, Mike Hallett
Hugh
abeth Lucia
FIRESTONE PHOTOGRAPHS, INC
168 NORTH THIRD STREET
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: A614-228-1757
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3rd from top – William Retsherm, Carol Potaki, Nell Monte,
Kingston,
Melissa Lucia,
aguzin, B. J. Poolson, Dennis Carver,
John Necaise, Joey Monte, Julian Rose, Joel Nichols
bottom row – Rory McDowell, Kathline Blake, Shirley Richardson, Christine Sour,
Mr. Clement E. Toca, Jennie McCollester, Julie Kennedy, Shirley Scafidi,
Wayne Ducone, Stanford Ladner

In 1968 Mr. Davis Williams took over the band and directed it until 1981. He took the band members to music clinics and fostered a deep appreciation for music. In 1974, one week before the opening of school, 55 band members reported to practice in a brand new band hall, fittingly named--The Brother Romuald Memorial Band Hall. As band director, Mr. Davis Williams led the band to win two Superior Ratings and three excellent ratings at the State Festival in 1974 to continue the long tradition of excellence in music at St. Stanislaus.

The 1971 Concert Band with Mr. Davis Williams

by Br. Xavier Werneth, SSC Archivist, May 2025